

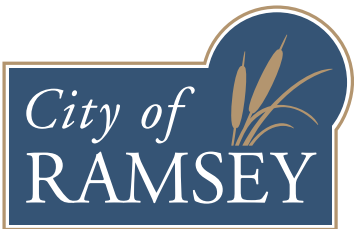
Incorporating Ramsey: Strengthening Community through Placemaking



Prepared by
Ben Picone, Erin Daly, Haley Sevening and Meaghan
McSorley

Students in PA 5253 Land Use Planning
Instructor: Dr. Fernando Burga
Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs

Prepared in Collaboration with
Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director
City of Ramsey



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Resilient Communities Project

University of Minnesota
330 HHHSPA
301—19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
Phone: (612) 625-7501
E-mail: rcp@umn.edu
Web site: <http://www.rcp.umn.edu>



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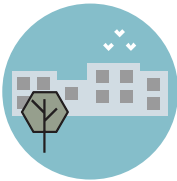
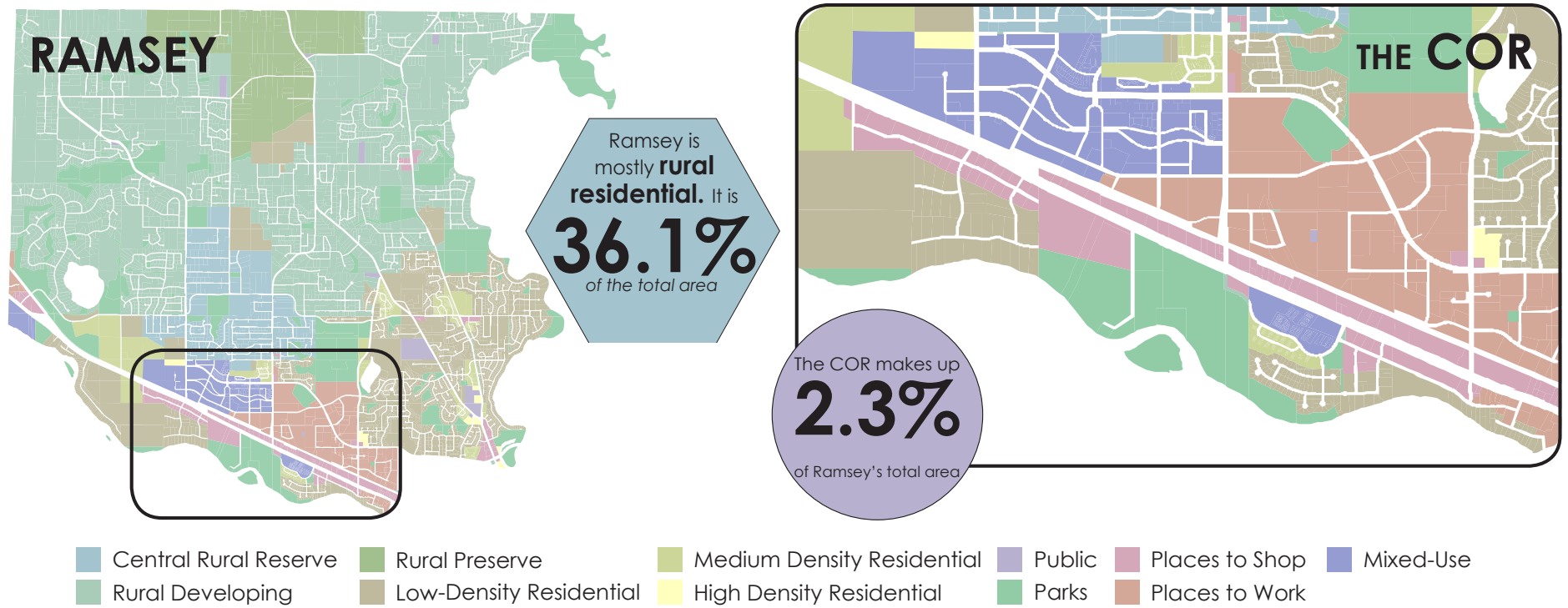


INTRODUCTION

The **COR**, or Center of Ramsey, is a **transit-oriented development** along the Northstar Commuter Rail in development since 2003. It presents a key opportunity for the City of Ramsey to **manage its growth**, but has faced multiple **challenges** throughout its short history. Specifically, Ramsey residents are unclear about the relationship between the **COR's urban identity** and greater Ramsey's **rural character**. By examining **four sites** within the COR, we aim to address this tension. We envision placemaking interventions in the form of **public tactics** and **planning strategies** that will activate the use of space in the COR and shape its identity.

LAND USES IN RAMSEY

The COR is a **growth management tool** that ensures public space and housing for Ramsey's **growing population**, which is expected to increase by over 10,000 people by the year 2040. The COR Development Plan regulates internal development, allowing areas to retain the rural character that defines Ramsey. The COR Development Plan that was recently passed by the Ramsey City Council includes the City's aspirations to make the COR a unique destination. However, the COR is not planned to be completed for some time. Until then, placemaking interventions can be used to promote an **urban experience** and forge **common identity** between urban and rural Ramsey.



CHALLENGES



Identity of the COR

Because the COR is still beingdeveloping, it is unclear what it will become. Residents may see the commuter rail as the mark of an urban center but wonder where the shops and restaurants are. Defining the identity of the COR in the near term is a crucial goal for community engagement and shaping future plan implementation.

Rural/Urban Balance

Ramsey residents take pride in the city's rural roots and scenic landscapes. Some may fear that the COR will rapidly urbanize their community and take away rural features. Residents who feel invested in the COR will be more open to recognizing **its role as a growth management tool that will preserve Ramsey's rural character.**

OUR PROJECT

We will be explaining **public tactics** and **planning strategies** rooted in **placemaking** principles to **celebrate** the COR as a place with positive **opportunities** for **all** Ramsey residents. Public tactics and planning strategies can be defined as:



Public tactic: Placemaking interventions derived from tactical urbanism that require minimal resources and can be done without changes to infrastructure or the built environment. These interventions are quicker, lighter, and cheaper.



Planning strategy: Placemaking interventions derived from phased planning methods that require changes to infrastructure or the built environment. These interventions can be small or large scale

The challenges identified above can be addressed using placemaking interventions in the form of **public tactics** and **planning strategies** to **encourage community engagement** and the **use of public space**. This series of posters explains what placemaking is, how it informs public tactics and planning strategies, and how the tactics and strategies can be used at **four sites** within the COR to shape its **identity** and sustain the city's **rural/urban balance**.

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SITE SELECTION: THE WHERE AND WHY

We employed a placemaking concept known as The Power of 10 to select four key areas highlighted in this project. The **Power of 10** is an approach that claims that a place can flourish when visitors have a **range of activities** available. The number ten is not a hard-set rule. Instead, it serves as a reminder to have an ultimate goal of **variety** and **choice** in each location. Central to the concept is that the **variety of activities** create a stronger place than each would individually. The Power of 10 is **scalable**: It applies to the street, the neighborhood, and even the city level. A neighborhood within a city should have a **variety of destinations** within it. Additionally, each destination should have **multiple attractions**.

SITE LOCATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

We have identified four key sites in the COR that have potential to become integral gathering spaces in Ramsey. These spaces stand out as focal points for the COR and each has the potential for a range of attractions within them.

RAMSEY STATION



The train station's connection to downtown Minneapolis positions it as a gateway to and from Ramsey. Planning strategies and public tactics will make it a gathering space for more than just commuters.

MAIN STREET



Whether entering Ramsey by car, train, or on foot, Sunwood Drive will be the geographic and retail center of the COR. Its central location makes it a natural fit as a destination.

THE DRAW



As one of the most developed areas of the COR, The Draw already has many elements that attract people. Planning strategies and public tactics would encourage these elements to linger.

MUNICIPAL PLAZA



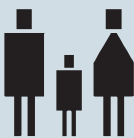
Currently a blank slate for events and programming, this area will be developed into a central plaza for the COR. Spending time in the COR will help current residents build a connection with the space.



SITE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

By focusing on placemaking interventions in these four locations, Ramsey can create **unique** gathering spaces for people. Each location can become a **key destination**. When looked at as a whole, the City can make the COR a comprehensive destination. Because each site is at a different stage of development and may attract different audiences, our proposals focus on two site-specific considerations to help ground these placemaking interventions.

Audience




The **targeted audiences** for placemaking interventions will differ depending on the site. In some cases, it can be most effective to target a **specific group**; in others, the audience can be a **broadier group**. When planning and implementing these tactics and strategies, it is important to consider the audience to make each placemaking intervention a success.

Timeline



Each site has its own considerations when it comes to the implementation of placemaking interventions because they are each in a **different phase** of their development. Main Street and the Plaza are early in the design process, while Ramsey Station and the Draw are fully developed. The public tactics and planning strategies at each site will need to be **adapted** accordingly.

 When using placemaking interventions to create exciting and desirable spaces, keeping the **Power of 10** in mind helps identify which areas can benefit the most. Through the use of a variety of public tactics and planning strategies, these four sites will be integral to creating a **successful and unique town center**.

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RAMSEY COMMUTER RAIL STATION: TRANSIT-ORIENTED PLACEMAKING



The **Northstar Commuter Rail** connects downtown Minneapolis with Big Lake, and includes a stop in Ramsey. Completed in 2011, the line's construction largely motivated development in the COR. New housing in this **suburban/rural area** means that residents can stay in Ramsey while living only steps from an easy ride to downtown Minneapolis. The Northstar offers residents a **stress-free way to commute** to the Twin Cities for work or leisure.



- ① Breakfast at the Station
- ② Tailgating
- ③ Enjoy the Wait
- ④ Pop-up Shops

SITE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The station serves two audiences: residents commuting to work and those who use the train for less frequent, leisure-oriented trips. Work commuters need a reason to enjoy the space and linger—to see the COR and Ramsey as more than just a park-and-ride. These commuters represent a **captive audience** during morning and evening rush hour and may include residents from the towns neighboring Ramsey. Meanwhile, many residents who occasionally take the train **see the station as a gateway** to Twins or Vikings games, but may not view the area as part of Ramsey's identity.

The **public tactics** below give workers a more **pleasant commute**, encouraging them to **slow down and engage** with the space as more than just somewhere they pass through. These tactics also give non-commuting residents a reason to come **enjoy the station in a joint-use fashion**, providing **economic opportunity for local vendors** and **greater consumer choice for residents** seeking more retail options.



Weekday commuters and vendors at Ramsey Station.



Celebrating Game Day at Ramsey Station.



Activating Ramsey Station through these tactics makes it a more **flexible** space, inviting in participants and perspectives that will shape the area's future. Lessons learned through these interventions will inform how Ramsey's staff adapt the current COR Development Plan into a **relevant vision for all residents**.



Placemaking at the Northstar Station gives everyone a reason to belong in the COR. Creating opportunities for the greater Ramsey community to gather breaks down barriers and unfamiliarity between people with different uses of the space. Markets and tailgating **bring people into the COR** and leave **transformative, positive associations**. These tactics cement the station as **public space** rather than **commuter space**.



Breakfast at the Station

Bring local food trucks focused on the commuter crowd, featuring coffee on Tuesdays or a local bakery on Wednesdays. Make them predictable enough for people to count on, but **keep it exciting** with new vendors. Until buses need the pick-up zone on Veterans Drive, it provides an ideal location for food trucks to set up shop.



Enjoy the Wait

Give commuters a reason to **linger** at the station and make their time in public space **more meaningful**. "Chairbombing" (see poster 6), combined with food trucks and other pop-up attractions, serve as **triangulators**, helping connect commuters to the places they move through and the people who move alongside them.



Weekly Pop-up Shops

Invite local **farmers, businesses, and craftspeople** to set up shop on a weekly basis. Give commuters a chance to buy produce or flowers on the way home, and give residents a **reason to visit**. Pop-ups could be **seasonal**, i.e. a holiday market which could also be hosted in the adjacent parking structure in inclement weather.



Tailgating

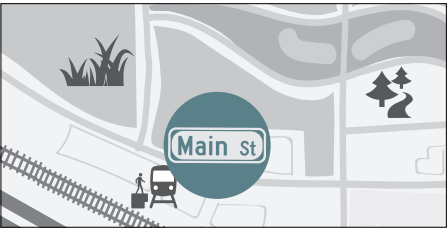
Create a space for residents to **gather** before catching the train to Target Field or U.S. Bank Stadium. Grill out, provide materials for Twins or Vikings fans to make signs, and enjoy **all of the game day journey**. The same could be done for the State Fair, or other large sporting or cultural events.

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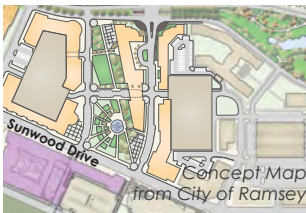
SUNWOOD DRIVE: MAKING A MAIN STREET



Maintaining a healthy retail environment is one of the challenges Ramsey faces (*see poster #6 of Surviving the Retail Apocalypse*). The benefit that main streets have over online retail is the power to **create a destination**. We can amplify this dimension by designing streets as **public** spaces that **prioritize pedestrians** and create opportunities for **community connections**. A main street that serves **multiple functions** and has a variety of destinations welcomes **diverse residents and visitors**.

SITE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Sunwood Drive functions as the COR's main street. Today there are 42 businesses on Sunwood Drive, but only nine provide goods to the public. All but three of those sell food. 25 provide services such as beauty, health, financial, and civic services that the public likely requires infrequently. **In the future**, there will be a municipal plaza and a network of streets around Sunwood Drive with additional retail and commercial space. The public tactics and planning strategies below can be used **now** to **activate** the space as it currently exists and to **shape** its development in the **future**.



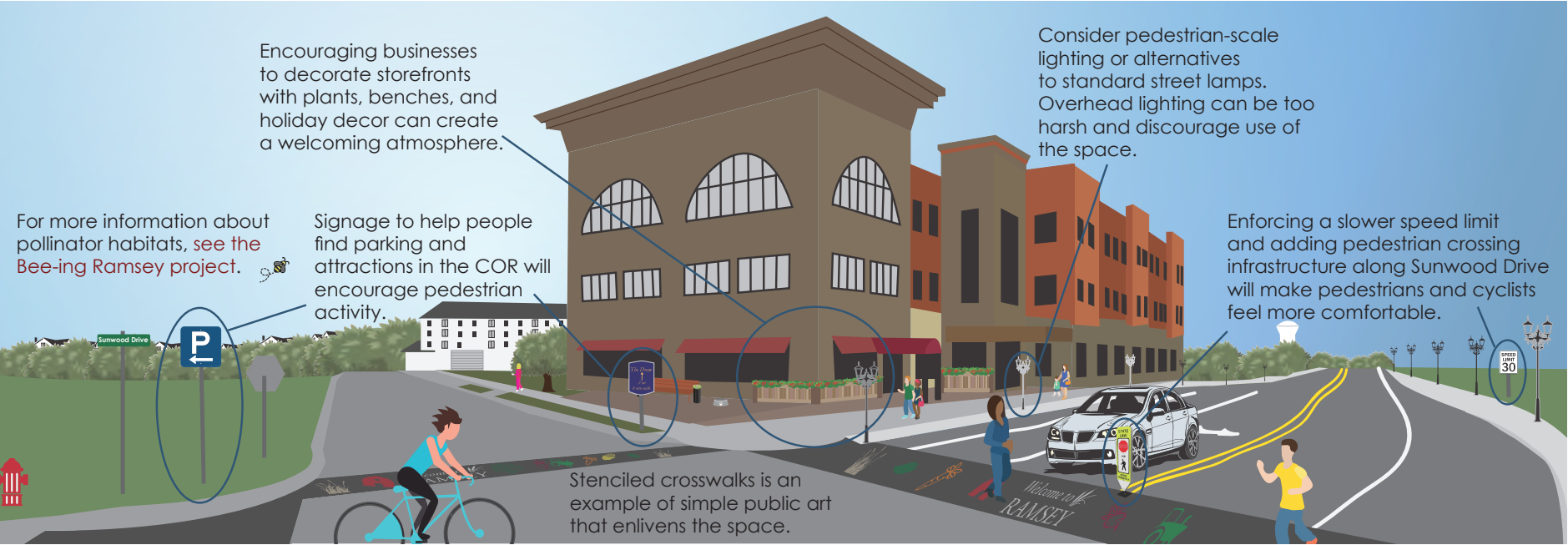
- ① Decorated Storefronts Contest
- ② Public Art Scavenger Hunt
- ③ Parking Signage
- ④ Pedestrian Infrastructure
- ⑤ Slow Traffic

Create Short-term Destinations

Using **simple public art** and hosting contests that require **in-person voting** provide more lasting opportunities to bring in visitors than one-day events. For example, some cities have had artists paint all the electrical boxes and then hosted a series of **scavenger hunts** where residents would stop at each box, talk to the artist, and collect stickers to obtain a prize. Another example would be to challenge businesses to **decorate their storefront** for each season and ask residents to vote in person for their favorite. Each of these approaches increases **vibrancy**, attracts visitors, and incites **engagement** on the part of businesses, residents, and visitors.

Design Streets for People

Ramsey residents and visitors alike need to be able to easily access the COR and **park their cars** so that they spend more time on foot. **Adding signage** to help visitors navigate to parking and destinations in the COR will facilitate this. *See poster #7 of the Highway 10 Project for more discussion of wayfinding signage.* Slowing traffic and adding more extensive **pedestrian crossing infrastructure** on Sunwood Drive will also help create a people-first main street.

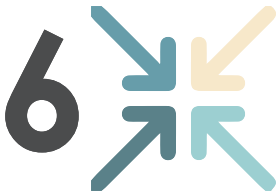


Main streets are defining features of **successful small towns** and are often **central to their identity**. Utilizing the public tactics and planning strategies above in conjunction with the Tool on poster #8 will help Sunwood Drive develop into a **thriving and unique destination**.

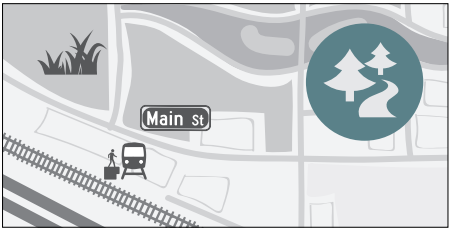
Activating the street with **short-term destinations** and **prioritizing pedestrians** will invite Ramsey residents and visitors alike to frequent the COR. The more time that they spend here, the more **invested and engaged** they become in its future. This will help develop the rural/urban balance.

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THE DRAW: PLACEMAKING IN THE HEART OF THE COR



The Draw is approximately seven acres of **natural** and **planned** open space, which serves as a **greenway** that connects the COR to regional park and trail systems. With a variety of amenities, including an **amphitheater**, **pedestrian pathways**, and **existing programming**. The Draw already attracts residents. Public tactics and planning strategies can be used to supplement existing amenities to create a space for **all Ramsey residents** and encourage them to linger.

SITE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Since The Draw is completely developed, the **audience** becomes the main consideration for placemaking interventions. Currently, the space is used mostly by residents living in the COR, but has the **amenities** and **connections** to be **accessible** and **desirable** for all Ramsey residents.




- ① Interactive Art
- ② Educational Programming
- ③ "Little Free" Box
- ④ Community Garden



Interactive Art

Interactive art is a planning strategy that enables **non-scripted participation** and **social interactions** by allowing the audience to become part of the art. This becomes an **attraction** for residents, future residents, developers, investors, and tourists. Interactive art also can provide **identity to the COR**.



Educational Programming


Educational programming in The Draw promotes space for residents to **learn** and **grow** together. Ramsey staff, community partners, or residents could lead educational sessions on topics such as **healthy eating**, **running a business**, or **basic Spanish**. This programming could occur at a **set location** or be implemented as a **walking tour**.






"Little Free" Box

Incorporating "little free" boxes in one or multiple locations encourages residents to **engage** with The Draw. The box could hold books and supplies like chalk, games, or other items that people could use onsite. This planning strategy is a **low-cost and low-commitment** way to encourage residents to gather in The Draw and use the space in **new and creative** ways.




Community Garden

A community garden in The Draw would enable **connections** between residents and the COR while bringing the **rural character** of Ramsey into The Draw. Community gardens also have additional benefits such as increased **food accessibility**, improved **health**, **preservation of natural areas**, and facilitation of **social interactions**.



Placemaking

in The Draw gives the COR **identity** by creating a space that people feel **connected to** and **inspired by**. These tactics and strategies could become **signature** events and features of the COR.



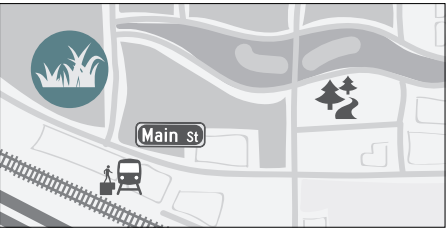
Because it is the **heart** of the COR, **placemaking** in The Draw assists in creating a rural/urban balance by encouraging residents to **use** and **occupy** the **space** more frequently.

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THE MUNICIPAL PLAZA: A BLANK CANVAS FOR RAMSEY



Centrally located in the COR, the future municipal plaza presents a perfect opportunity for the residents of Ramsey to **gather and interact**. The site is already the location for cornerstone events such as **Happy Days** and the **Ramsey Farmers' Market**. This area could continue to serve as a **focal point** to the COR before its development as a municipal plaza. After its completion, it can also serve as a **gateway** for the Northstar Commuter Rail from the south and the greenway from the north.

SITE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The design for the future municipal plaza is still being developed, but will include flexible use areas, restaurants, and a water feature. The plaza will anchor the COR as a signature destination making it a centerpiece for both events and daily activities. However, the undeveloped space can be used now for programming that can help inform the final design of the plaza.



Current



Future

- ① Public Market
- ② Winter Activities
- ③ Chair Bombing



Winter Activities

The Municipal Plaza presents the perfect opportunity for Ramsey to embrace the status of a "Winter City." The large, open space provides an area for pop-up winter activities that would draw people to the COR. Specifically, an ice skating rink could be a **simple, low-cost** way to create a family-friendly, universally appealing, and easily accessible place for people to gather outdoors in the winter. Family-friendly, universally appealing, and with a **low barrier to entry**, an ice rink would create a place for people to be outdoors even in the winter.



Chair Bombing

The goal of "Chair Bombing" is to improve comfort, encourage social activity, and create a **sense of place** in public places. Seating is placed in public places in ways that let friends and neighbors **interact**. Ramsey could set out **fun, creative** seating at events or during high traffic times, as chair bombing is most successful when there are **multiple activities** occurring at the same time.



Open-Air Market

Before and after the plaza is built, this site is a perfect place for market-type events. Local vendors can set up shop and sell art, produce, or crafts. The event can be tailored to the season: a Christmas market in December or a food truck festival in July. Events like this could serve as the impetus to **bring people to the COR**, where they can continue to spend time. The farmers' market, already held on the field, is a perfect way to both bring people to the COR and **celebrate** Ramsey's rural heritage.



Brick Engraving

Ramsey should take advantage of the plaza's construction as an opportunity to **engage the community** and involve them in the development process. Residents could have the opportunity to engrave a brick that becomes a piece of the plaza. Ultimately, this would help give the residents of Ramsey a **sense of ownership** of the plaza, and by extension, the COR itself.



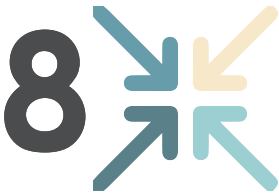
Once developed, the plaza will become a **central gathering place** for the residents of Ramsey. Until then, the area can serve as a site for events and programming that bring people to the COR and **shape the vision** for future development.



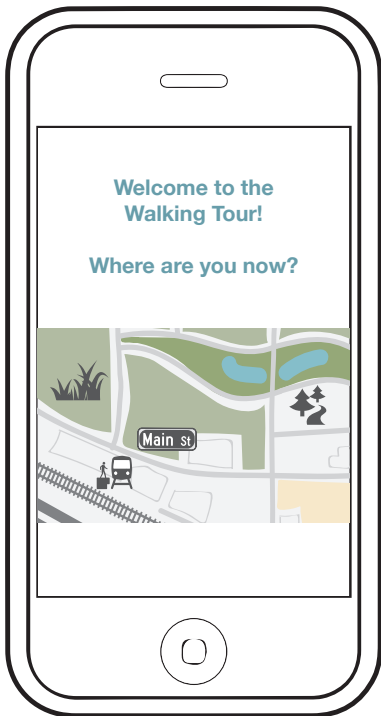
Being such a **flexible, open area**, the plaza is an ideal location for public tactics aimed at bringing people into the COR. **Positive experiences** and **personal connections** with neighbors will transform the COR into a **warm, inviting** space that people want to spend time in.

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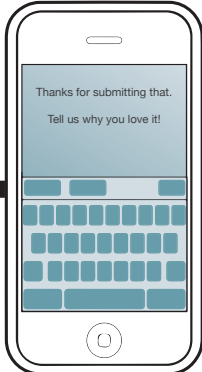
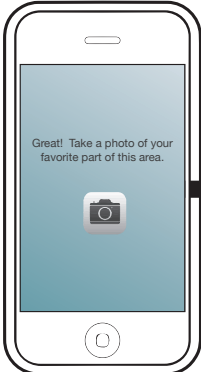
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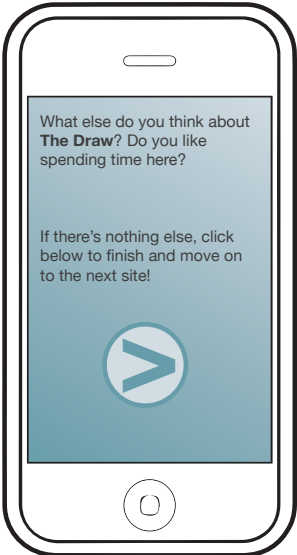
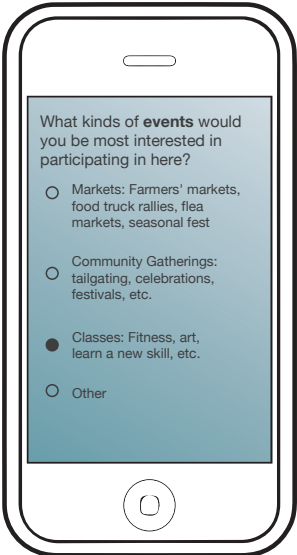
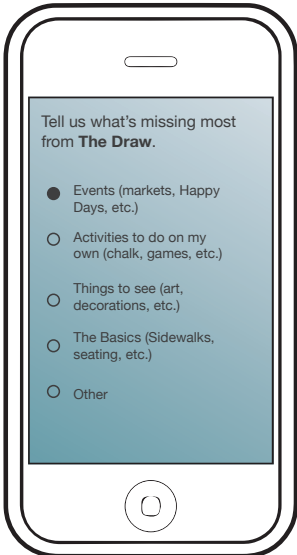
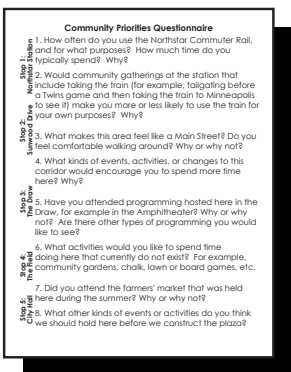
EXPLORE THE COR: MOBILE ENGAGEMENT TOOL PROTOTYPE



In order to prioritize public tactics and planning strategies, it is important to **collect feedback** about how residents, visitors, and commuters currently **perceive** sites in the COR. This mobile app and dashboard prototype can **engage residents in this process** and open conversations to **re-envision the space**. The app includes a walking tour route with a questionnaire that corresponds to specific stops along the route. Responses will help determine which strategies and tactics to employ **immediately** and which to use in the **future**. The app can be used in conjunction with the tactics and strategies to **refine your approach iteratively**. This assessment can be enhanced by asking participants to **take photographs** of their favorite parts of the COR. The photographs will help clarify how residents experience the COR today.



While you could achieve the same results with a paper survey and data entry, see below for benefits of using a mobile platform.

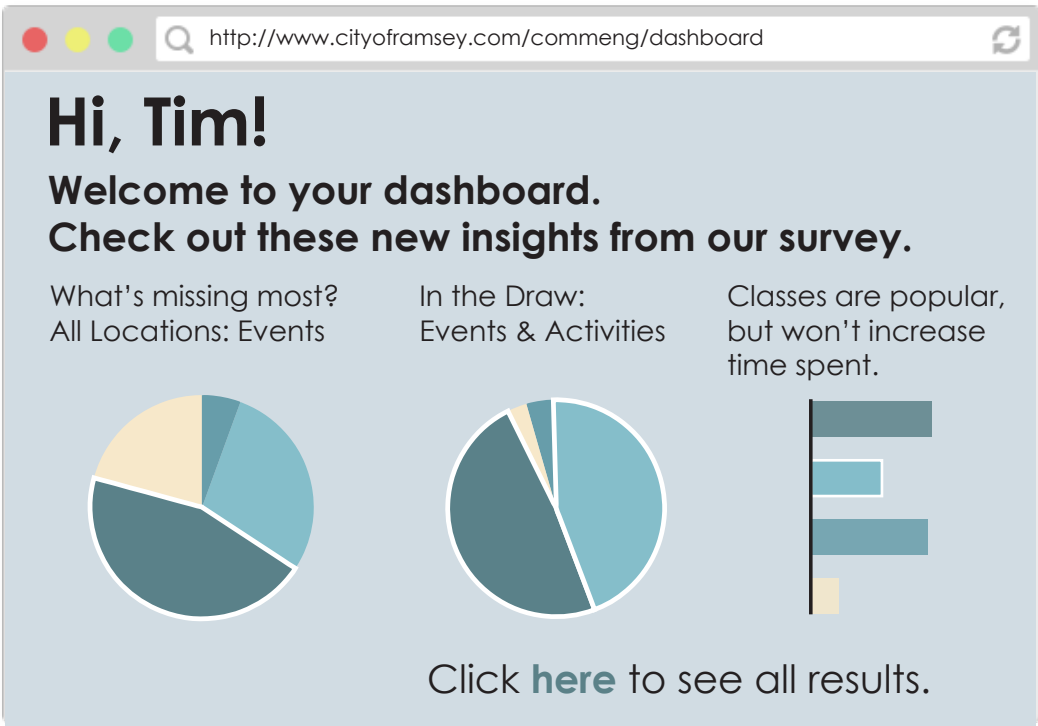


One of the benefits of using a mobile solution would be the ability to quickly **aggregate data** and **run analytics** without manual data entry.

To **operationalize** this, test this approach using existing online survey tools and analytics before developing something unique.



Using online tools allows you to reach a **larger audience**. While a guided tour is ideal, residents could use the app to take the walk **on their own time**.



This sample tool was created to illustrate how to **prioritize** public tactics and planning strategies based on **feedback** from residents and visitors. The same effect could be achieved at a variety of **scales** and without the use of mobile technology. The questions, sites, and other features in this tool can be modified to meet specific needs.

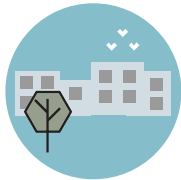
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CONCLUSION


Ramsey Station, Main Street, The Draw, and the future **Municipal Plaza** are key sites in the COR that would benefit from **placemaking** interventions. Public tactics and planning strategies can be used to shape the **identity of the COR** in the short term, influence **future plan implementation**, and maintain a **rural/urban balance**. These tactics and strategies should be used in **a variety of destinations** throughout the COR to create **unique public spaces** that people **connect** with and want to spend time in.



Identity of the COR




Rural/Urban Balance




What public tactics shape the identity of the COR?

- Enjoy the Wait/Chair Bombing
- Breakfast at the Station
- Winter Activities




What public tactics help balance rural/urban perceptions?

- Tailgating
- Pop-up Shops/Open-air Markets
- Create Temporary Destinations
- Educational Programming



What planning strategies shape the identity of the COR?

- Design Streets for People
- "Little Free" Box
- Community Garden
- Interactive Art




What planning strategies help balance rural/urban perceptions?

- Brick Engraving


The use of tactics and strategies is one way to address the challenges faced by Ramsey to create **unique experiences** and forge **common identity**. City staff can facilitate placemaking interventions, but it is the **residents** that make these tactics and strategies truly effective.

NEXT STEPS...

For Ramsey City Staff:




Revisit the Plan




The COR *Development Plan* is comprehensive and full of great ideas. Looking at it with a placemaking lens can lead to a new perspective on planning implementation and revitalize interest in the COR.

Engage Residents




Placemaking depends on collaborative, community-driven ideas. Continue to engage the community and gather input throughout the planning process to implement placemaking with long-lasting impacts.

Observe




Much information can be gathered from watching how people use and interact with a space. Record data on residents' observed preferences and habits along with traditional opinion surveys.

Just Try It




New ideas often get stalled because of apprehensions about feasibility. However, most placemaking strategies are low-cost and low-commitment and do not require any permanent form. Be flexible and open to trying new ideas.

For Ramsey Residents:




Get Involved




Placemaking principles point to the importance of bringing people into a space. The more people in a place, the stronger the place becomes.

Voice Your Opinion




Placemaking begins and ends with people. It works best when it is inclusive and community-driven. Share your ideas and opinions to take ownership of the space.

Make it Happen




Because placemaking is driven by residents, some tactics and strategies can be done without municipal assistance. Take control and make placemaking happen by chair bombing in a space you want to spend time in.

Just Try It



Big ideas are not as daunting as they may first appear. Do not be afraid to try something. You may be surprised at how much can be accomplished.

YOU ARE NEVER FINISHED

 **Public tactics** and **planning strategies** rooted in **placemaking** principles can establish the COR as a unique destination in Ramsey. However, these strategies need to be implemented as part of a continuing process. Resident preferences, interests, and opinions are always changing so the public tactics and planning strategies being used must reflect those changes. It is critical to **expect change** and **be flexible** when using a placemaking approach to ensure public tactics and planning strategies are **reflective** of changing community needs.